It was due chiefly to Tseng Kuo-fan, Li Hung-chang, and other Chinese that the Nienfei, who remained formidable after the T'ai P'ings had been suppressed, were dispersed (1867).

The Moslem, or Panthay, Rebellion, in Yunnan, had its stronghold at Talifu and as its head Tu Wen-hsiu. For years it held out, but in 1873 it, too, was crushed, and chiefly by forces under Chinese rather than Manchu leadership.

It was also principally due to Chinese generalship that the Northwest and the far West were restored to the Ch'ing. In the widespread unrest in the Empire, many of the Moslems in Shensi and Kansu had rebelled, and about 1864 much of the New Dominion had become virtually independent—under a number of different leaders. One of the more prominent of the latter was Yakub Beg, who became master of Kashgar and much of the western portion of the Tarim River Basin. It looked as though the work of the great Ch'ing Emperors in this vast region was to be undone.

The reconquest of the West was almost entirely the work of Tso Tsung-t'ang, a fellow provincial and former lieutenant of Tseng Kuo-fan. He had had a prominent part in the suppression of the T'ai P'ings and of the Nienfei. Before 1870 he had pacified Shensi. Slowly but fairly steadily he fought his way westward. Suchow in Kansu fell in 1873 after a siege of almost three years. Far from the central provinces and forced to find his own supplies, in more than one season Tso set his army to planting and reaping a crop for its subsistence. In 1877 Yakub Beg, his chief opponent, was removed by death—whether by violence

or disease seems uncertain—and by the early part of 1878 Kashgar, Yarkand, and Khotan had surrendered. Tso's achievements are comparable to those of the great commanders who carried the Chinese arms into that region under the Han and the T'ang.

Just as the last of the great rebellions was being suppressed, flood and drought brought distress—floods in five of the southern provinces in 1876, and drought in 1877 and 1878 in the North, especially in Shansi and Shensi. Millions died of the ensuing famine, but, fortunately, by this time the dynasty had so far regained its strength that the load placed on the treasury by relief funds and loss of taxes did not prove more than a temporary embarrassment.